

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 13416

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, IT

SUBJECT: MEETING WITH PRIME MINISTER ANDREOTTI

1. I CALLED ON PRIME MINISTER ANDREOTTI AUGUST 12 TO CONGRATULATE HIM ON HIS SUCCESS IN PUTTING TOGETHER A NEW GOVERNMENT. I ALSO TOLD HIM THAT AS I WAS ABOUT TO LEAVE FOR THE UNITED STATES, WASHINGTON WOULD BE PARTICULARLY INTERESTED IN HEARING HIS VIEWS ON THE CURRENT SITUATION.

2. WHILE HE WAS OBVIOUSLY TIRED FROM WHAT HE DESCRIBED AS A VERY TRYING PERIOD, I FOUND ANDREOTTI QUITE CHEERFUL AND ANXIOUS TO TACKLE THE ADMITTEDLY TOUGH JOB THAT LAY AHEAD. HE WAS CONFIDENT THAT, DESPITE ITS RATHER UNSTABLE APPEARANCE, HIS GOVERNMENT WOULD LAST AT LEAST TO THE END OF THE YEAR IF NOT LONGER. HE ATTRIBUTED THIS TO THE NEED OF THE PCI TO BE ON ITS BEST BEHAVIOR DURING THIS PERIOD. HE THOUGHT THAT THE PSI AND THE LAY PARTIES HAD LITTLE CHOICE BUT TO COOPERATE, EITHER BY DIRECT SUPPORT OR ABSTENTION, IN ENACTING CRITICAL LEGISLATION PROPOSED BY THE GOVERNMENT.

3. ANDREOTTI SHARED MY DISAPPOINTMENT THAT IT HAD NOT BEEN POSSIBLE TO FORM A MAJORITY WITH THE SUPPORT OF SOME OF THE DC'S TRADITIONAL PARTNERS. HE WAS PARTICULARLY DISHEARTENED BY THE ATTITUDES OF BOTH THE PRI AND PSDI. HE SAID THAT THEY LAY PARTIES WERE CRITICAL OF THE DC, WHICH THEY HELD RESPONSIBLE FOR THEIR POOR SHOWING IN THE ELECTIONS. COMMENT: THE

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SIBLE FOR THEIR POOR SHOWING IN THE ELECTIONS. COMMENT: THE

SMALLER PARTIES, OF COURSE, HAVE LARGELY THEMSELVES TO BLAME FOR THEIR CURRENT PREDICAMENT. END COMMENT. ANDREOTTI SAID THAT ALTHOUGH HE HAD TRIED TO AVOID CONCESSIONS TO THE COMMUNISTS THAT COULD BE POTENTIALLY DAMAGING, THE REALITY OF THE SITUATION REQUIRED THAT THEIR SIZEABLE ELECTORAL WEIGHT BE ACKNOWLEDGED IN SOME FORM.

4. THE PRIME MINISTER THEN OUTLINED THE INTERNAL PROBLEMS PREVAILING WITHIN THE PSI AND LAY PARTIES WHICH MAKE IT IMPOSSIBLE FOR THEM TO JOIN A COALITION WITH THE DC AT THIS TIME. HE CHARACTERIZED THE PSDI (AND TO A LESSER EXTENT, THE PRI) AS DIVIDED BY LEADERSHIP CONTESTS. BOTH SARAGAT AND LA MALFA WERE OLD, BUT THEY WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO HOLD ON INDEFINITELY. AS FOR THE SOCIALISTS, DEMARTINO'S REPLACEMENT BY CRAXI WAS A POSITIVE DEVELOPMENT, BUT CRAXI NEEDED TIME TO ESTABLISH HIMSELF WITHIN HIS PARTY--AT LEAST TO THE END OF THE YEAR. FOR THE TIME BEING, ANDREOTTI THOUGHT IT BEST NOT TO PRESS THE SOCIALISTS. THE QUICKEST WAY TO HAVE THEM COME AROUND, HE SAID, WAS TO DEMONSTRATE THAT HIS GOVERNMENT WAS SERIOUS IN PASSING SUBSTANTIVE MEASURES TO MEET ITALY'S CRITICAL NEEDS. ONCE THE SOCIALISTS COULD BE PERSUADED TO FORM A NEW PARTNERSHIP WITH THE DC, HE HAD LITTLE DOUBT THAT THE PSDI AND PRI WOULD ALSO JOIN IN.

5. ANDREOTTI SAID THAT THE OUTCOME OF THE GERMAN AND US ELECTIONS WAS ANOTHER FACTOR OF IMPORTANCE TO ALL THE PARTIES AND PARTICULARLY TO THE COMMUNISTS. HE SAID THAT THE PCI BELIEVES THAT A DEMOCRATIC ADMINISTRATION WOULD BE MORE PRONE TO ACCEPT PARTICIPATION IN THE GOVERNMENT. ANDREOTTI AND I AGREED, HOWEVER, THAT THIS VIEW HAD NO BASIS, AND THAT NO SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE IN US POLICY TOWARD ITALY SHOULD BE EXPECTED AFTER NOVEMBER.

6. I SUGGESTED TO THE PRIME MINISTER THAT IT WAS PARTICULARLY IMPORTANT TO PAY ATTENTION TO THE NEWLY ELECTED DC PARLIAMENTARIANS IN ORDER TO PROVIDE THEM WITH A SENSE OF PARTICIPATION IN THE PARTY AND GOVERNMENT PROCESS. HE READILY AGREED THAT WAYS NEEDED TO BE FOUND TO UTILIZE THE CONSIDERABLE TALENTS OF THIS GROUP: SMALL GROUP MEETINGS WITH THE NEW PARLIAMENTARIANS WERE BEING CONSIDERED. HE HAD, IN FACT, CONFIDENTIAL

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BEEN TALKING TO TREASURY MINISTER STAMMATI THAT VERY MORNING ABOUT THIS.

7. AS I DEPARTED, ANDREOTTI ASKED ME TO EXTEND HIS SINCEREST REGARDS BOTH TO THE PRESIDENT AND TO THE SECRETARY. IN PARTICULAR, HE WANTED THEM TO KNOW THAT THE COMMUNISTS WOULD NOT RECEIVE MINISTERIAL APPOINTMENTS IN ANY GOVERNMENT FOR WHICH HE IS RESPONSIBLE, NOR WOULD THEY, HE WAS SURE, IN ANY DC

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